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# THE BAPTIST Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

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## Mississippi volunteers head to Florida

By William H. Perkins Jr.  
Editor

The Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Unit was activated August 14 to assist the victims of Hurricane Charley in Florida, where the category four storm caused widespread damage and displaced thousands of families as it swept across the central portion of the peninsular state.

The unit's self-contained kitchen, based on a tractor-trailer filled with food supplies, commercial-grade cooking equipment, and a high-capacity electrical generator, is currently stationed at First Church of Arcadia, Fla., where Mississippi Baptist volunteers are preparing about 6,400 meals per day for hurricane victims and emergency response personnel.

Donna Swarts, a member of Goodwater Church, Magee, is the overall coordinator of the Mississippi Baptist operation in Arcadia — the first woman ever to hold that position during a full-scale disaster response.

"The opportunity to coordinate the many volunteers and volunteer agencies involved in this size operation can be a challenge. I have no doubt from whom my help cometh: 'My help cometh from the Lord.' (Psalm 121:2)," she said.

Jerry Sanford, pastor of Sardis Church, Sardis, has been working at the unit for about ten days and has toured the affected area to conduct assessments of the victims' needs.

"The devastation is widespread, massive. There's everything from minor damage to homes totally wiped out, upside down, or completely gone," he said.

Sanford said the Mississippi Baptist volunteers are working long hours under less than ideal conditions to help the area's hurricane victims. He cited oppressive heat, high humidity, and regular downpours as factors



**SERIOUS STIRRING** — Vernon Botel, a member of Briar Hill Church, Florence, mixes the contents of a huge commercial cooker in preparation for feeding thousands of victims of Hurricane Charley in Florida. Botel and other members of the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Unit are currently stationed at First Church, Arcadia, and are cooking more than 6,400 meals per day. The Mississippi unit has a capacity of 20,000 meals per day. (BR photo by Don Gann)

that have combined to make the work difficult at best. "One of the afternoon storms was so severe that it blew down the canopy at the unit," he said, causing no injuries but disrupting the demanding schedule under which the unit has been operating.

The North American Mission Board (NAMB) of the Southern Baptist

Convention (SBC), headquartered in Atlanta, is charged with coordinating SBC-wide disaster relief efforts. NAMB reports that Southern Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers have prepared over 400,000 meals, cleared an untold number of trees and debris from roadways and houses, and provided showers and water purification for thousands of displaced residents.

The NAMB also issued a call for chaplains. "Chaplain available to serve in Florida are asked to contact their state chaplain director or state disaster relief director immediately," according to the NAMB web site.

Volunteers, mostly housed in local Southern Baptist churches throughout the affected areas, have been working 18-hour days while enduring daytime high temperatures approaching 100 degrees.

The Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Unit is funded by gifts to the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering and supported administratively by gifts to the Mississippi Cooperative Program.

To make a tax-deductible contribution to the Hurricane Charley relief effort, make checks payable to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, specify "Hurricane Charley Relief" on the memo line, and mail to MBCB Business Office, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.

For regular updates on Southern Baptist Disaster Relief efforts, visit [www.mbc.org](http://www.mbc.org) and [www.namb.net/dr](http://www.namb.net/dr).

Baptist Press, NAMB, and Kay Cassibry, executive director of the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union, contributed to this article.



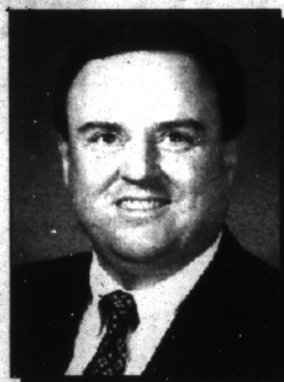
Special edition inside

**UP AND RUNNING** — Members of the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Unit put the finishing touches on site preparation as they begin cooking thousands of meals for the victims of Hurricane Charley in Florida. The Mississippi Baptist volunteers, who are being assisted by a team from the Alabama Baptist Disaster Relief Unit, are based at First Church, Arcadia. (BR photo by Don Gann)





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# Reaching our state, and beyond

**T**hey feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and visit the prisons to save the lost. They are some of the purest reflections of the ministry of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. They are the Mississippi Baptist volunteers who work under the manifold programs funded by the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering (MLSMO). As this newspaper goes to press, many of those Mississippi Baptist volunteers are using the supplies and equipment provided by gifts each to MLSMO to prepare a significant percentage of the hundreds of thousands of meals being provided to the victims of Hurricane Charley in Florida.

The Disaster Relief Task Force is but one of a dozen ministries funded by gifts to MLSMO:

### EVANGELISM — \$165,000

- Language/Ethnic — \$20,000. Brings the Gospel to various language, ethnic, and culture groups through leadership training and ministries to internationals.

- Criminal Justice — \$25,000. Provides leadership training, Bible, and discipleship materials for one of the largest unreached people groups in the state.

- International Collegiate Ministry — \$10,000. Provides international student interns at Mississippi's three largest universities to help win to Christ the international students who will soon be returning to their homelands.

- Literacy — \$10,000. Helps to provide Christian certified leaders for such programs as English as a Second Language, Adult Reading and Writing, and Tutoring Children and Youth.

- Associational Mission Projects — \$100,000. Empowers local missions initiatives in evangelism and community ministry through associational missions directors.

### MISSIONS MOBILIZATION — \$340,000

- Volunteer Ministry Assistance — \$340,000. Supports the record number of Mississippi Baptist short-term volunteer missionaries who fan out each year across North America and the world.

**T**hen the people rejoiced for they had offered willingly" (1 Chronicles 29:9a).

The example is set before us to rejoice in giving willingly. Just as King David called all the assembly of Israelites to give not for the palace of man but for the temple of God, all Mississippi Baptists are being called to give to meet needs in our state and share Christ with the world. The Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering is the place to begin.

"Mississippi: Are You Willing?" The theme for the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering is challenging all Mississippi Baptists to come together in prayer and giving. Pray for a greater desire to see Mississippi radiant before God and then willingly give to see that desire come to be.

The statement has been made that "it takes a village to raise a child." One might say "it takes the whole church working together to broaden its outreach." The state mission offering can do just that. It encour-

## Mississippi, Are You Willing?



Mississippi Baptist State Missions  
Margaret Lackey Offering

### RETREAT MINISTRIES — \$650,000

- Camp Garaywa — \$325,000. The state's Girls in Action (GA) campground in Clinton plays host to over 2,000 girls each summer and dozens of other groups year-round.

- Central Hills Retreat — \$325,000. The state's Royal Ambassadors (RA) campground near Kosciusko also serves as a year-round facility for retreats and camps, with a focus on summer programs for boys.

### CHURCH PLANTING — \$400,000

Assists with the initial expenses of starting new churches in strategic areas of the state, to reach the estimated 57% of Mississippi's population that remains unchurched.

### HUMAN NEEDS — \$95,000

- Disaster Relief — \$50,000. Enough said. One of the Mississippi Baptist Convention's most high-profile ministries, MLSMO helps provide a cup of water in Jesus' name — and much more.

- Pastoral Benevolence — \$30,000. Provides financial assistance, counseling, and love in action for pastors and their families who find themselves in crisis situations.

- Christian Women's Job Corps — \$15,000. Offers a hand up, not a handout, to women trapped in poverty to help lift them to self-sufficiency through mentoring and the acquisition of job, life, and parenting skills. Bible study is a part of this program.

Our special offerings are important. While giving to the Cooperative Program funds the basic operations — the framework — of Southern Baptist and Mississippi Baptist missions, these special offerings allow us to go even higher, reach ever farther, to fulfill our Master's Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20).

With the world growing seemingly darker every day, we have no time to waste. We must pray, give, and go as the Lord leads. The Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering is a great place to start.

## GUEST OPINION:



### Life's greatest adventure

By Melleen Moore, member  
Macedonia Church, Petal

ages the church to work together to make the greatest impact for Christ. The total church leadership can promote the state mission offering knowing that Christ will be proclaimed among our Mississippi neighbors. Church pastors and Woman's Missionary Union leaders are leading the way in awareness of needs, avenues of service, and accepting the opportunity to give.

The first part of awareness involves being afforded the opportunity to hear about the need for evangelism, mobilization, retreat ministries, church planning, and human needs. The second part is a personal desire to listen,

allowing the needs to touch the heart. Prayer from the heart of man touches the heart of God leading the way for God to open our eyes to see needs as He sees them.

Avenues of service are all around, if only observed rather than just seen. According to Webster, to observe is to "study with the eye," making what is seen become a part of ourselves. How can we turn away from facts such as 57% of Mississippians are unchurched? Yes, church planting is one of the avenues of service.

Accepting the opportunity to give requires the heart to have been touched by awareness and avenues of service. Giving will-

ingly makes the heart rejoice. Rejoicing through giving is to worship of our God. This is the call for Mississippi Baptists to give as never before that more may be done in the name of Jesus Christ.

Pastors, as the shepherd of the church, lead the flock to become aware of the needs in our state, to know about avenues of service and to be willing to give. Leaders in WMU and Women's and Men's Ministries, encourage the pastor and members to observe Mississippi and answer the question, "Are You Willing?"

Giving to the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering is an opportunity to answer the question at hand with action. The state goal of \$1.65 million may sound enormous. Considering only one-half of the churches in Mississippi gave to the state mission offering last year, the goal is reachable especially if we follow the example set before us.

*Then the people rejoiced for they had offered willingly (1 Chronicles 29: 9a).*



# Outreach touches Greeks during Olympics

ATLANTA (BP) — As a Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) staff member, Cheryl Wolfinger had found her calling after earning a master's degree in religious education at Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth. Working with young people in Fort Worth, she saw countless lives changed during FCA's summer camps and school groups known as "Huddles" during the academic year.

However, Southern Baptist missionary Fred Sorrells, then stationed in Madagascar but on temporary stateside assignment, suggested using sports for world outreach. "When Fred presented the idea, he said that 95% of the world's population lives outside the United States; was I willing to start a ministry that would reach the 95%?" Wolfinger said. "That was kind of my wakeup call."

Since she organized the International Sports Federation (ISF) in 1993, the Atlanta-based ministry has worked with International Mission Board missionaries in more than 40 countries on six continents. ISF has dispatched more than 1,500 volunteers on more than 200 projects, touching an estimated 20,000 people, its president said.

Its latest outreach will have international proportions. Thirty-one ISF volunteers are in Athens, Greece, to conduct clinics in volleyball, basketball, and baseball during the Summer Olympics Aug. 13-29. While sharing the Gospel with as many people as possible, Wolfinger said doesn't maintain a conversion count.

One reason is differences in opportunities. One team returned from Africa with members talking of 800 people accepting Christ; another that went to Afghanistan only had the chance to talk with a handful of Muslims.



OLYMPIC OUTREACH — Janet Passman, an International Sports Federation volunteer coordinator in Athens, helps out during a children's activity day in a local community center. Passman is a faculty member and athletic trainer at Louisiana College in Pineville, which is affiliated with the Louisiana Baptist Convention. (BP photo courtesy of ISFO)

"We could easily say we have 8,000 decisions," said Wolfinger, age 39 and a member of Wildwood Church in Acworth, Ga., "but who's to know someone raised their hand because they didn't want to go to hell and who raised their hand because they wanted to accept Jesus?"

"I am so amazed," she added of ISF's opportunities to share the Gospel. "I never felt

worthy to serve as the leader. I feel it was a matter of willingness and not skill in putting together the organization."

Still, ISF is ready to go when called; Wolfinger said they receive more than 100 requests a year for sports teams.



Wolfinger

In the case of the Olympics, these athletic missionaries are capitalizing on interest in the games to reach local residents, according to Sarah Beth, director of Team ISF's missions mobilization unit.

"A lot of this team is non-athletes," Beth said of the members, who range in age from 17-73. "A lot of it is going to be recreational and relational ministry. We're looking at ministry in parks, having drinks and food. Our number one goal is developing relationships with Greeks so when we leave, the [IMB] missionaries will have phone numbers, e-mail addresses or some way to reach them."

Since ISF only sends teams overseas, it didn't organize an outreach for the first Summer Olympics after its founding — the 1996 games in Atlanta. However, Wolfinger kept busy. Through her contact with Sorrells, she became a special assistant to a delegation of six athletes and two coaches from the islands of Comoros, a small nation 200 miles off the coast of Madagascar.

Working with Olympic champion Madeline Mims, Wolfinger collected surplus athletic equipment and imprinted the African nation's flag on white tank tops to fashion team uniforms. Wolfinger also video-

taped their races and took numerous still photographs, which she presented to each team member. She also took them to a Gospel outreach and gave them a New Testament autographed by Mims.

Before the games ended, two of the Comoros athletes had prayed with Sorrells to receive Christ as Savior, Wolfinger said.

Although Wolfinger then led a team of nearly 300 volunteers to Sydney, Australia, in 2000, she isn't able to travel to Athens. Diagnosed with lymphoma earlier this year, her treatments continued through Aug. 12. Wolfinger said the high temperatures in Greece would be too much for her weakened condition.

"I've been over to Greece twice to meet with missionaries and Greek pastors, so to be watching the Olympics from my couch is going to be tough,"

## THE BAPTIST Record

Wolfinger said, "but when I was diagnosed in February, my attitude has been, 'Why not me?' America has the best healthcare in the world."

"Nothing surprises God. He knew all along this was going to happen. If I believe God is in control and He knew what was going to happen, this is part of His plan."

Wolfinger knows those who go will face tough conditions. She said it is illegal to share the Gospel with anyone under 17 without their parents' permission. Many who have visited Greece have returned disheartened by attitudes toward the Gospel, Wolfinger said.

This will be the second outreach this summer in Athens. A team of 19 visited the city June 12-22 to lead clinics in volleyball and basketball for more than 75 teenagers, Beth said.

In addition to sports clinics, ISF volunteers will do prayerwalks, pass out water bottles, and distribute Gospel tracts — reaching both Greeks and people from nations around the world, Beth said.

### Looking back

#### 10 years ago

Five individuals with Mississippi ties are appointed to the mission field by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, including James and Penni Tilton, Gary D. Powell, and Dennis and Janet Brotherton.

#### 20 years ago

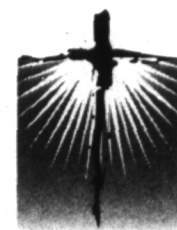
Maurice Flowers, Jones Association director of missions, is selected by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board as 1984's outstanding missionary leader. He is recognized during Home Missions Week at Ridgecrest Assembly in North Carolina.

#### 50 years ago

Paul Harrell is licensed to the Gospel ministry by Mt. Pisgah Church, Rankin County, of which he has been an active member since boyhood. He will continue his studies this fall at Mississippi College in Clinton.

## Barna: symbols are OK

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — An overwhelming majority of Americans favor allowing traditional Christian values and symbols in the nation's culture, according to a study by the Barna Group. Barna even concludes that tens of millions of Americans would support a constitutional amendment to declare Christianity the official faith of the United States. The study, released July 26, found that 79% of adults rejected any policy toward "removing signs that list the Ten Commandments from government buildings," including 60% who were "strongly opposed." Less than one out of every five adults supports such a policy. Other findings include: Only 13% of those questioned favored eliminating the phrase "In God We Trust" from the nation's currency, while 84% oppose the idea. Nearly three-quarters of the population was "strongly opposed" to the change. Just 15% of adults were in favor of removing the phrase "one nation, under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance while 84% were opposed. About 60% of Americans favor teaching creationism in public schools while less than 40% do not. Eighty-three percent of those surveyed said allowing the use of a word for male-female relations on broadcast television is inappropriate. Just 15% thought it was acceptable, Barna found. By a two-to-one margin, Americans are opposed to a constitutional amendment to establish Christianity as the official religion of the United States, but Barna said the number of people who favor the change — 32% — is surprising. "Almost 70 million adults favor such an amendment," Barna said, based on his calculations. "That is a huge vote of confidence in the Christian faith and a tacit statement about people's concerns regarding the direction and lukewarm spirituality of the nation," he said.



MISSISSIPPI  
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THE  
SECOND  
FRONT PAGE

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## Med Center offers pastoral crisis seminar

The Pastoral Care Department of Mississippi Baptist Medical Center (MBMC) in Jackson will sponsor a seminar entitled, Pastoral Crisis Intervention, from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. on September 9-10 at the B.C. Rogers Student Center on the campus of Mississippi College in Clinton.

The workshop will combine faith-based resources and traditional techniques of crisis intervention, with participants learning how pastoral interventions may be effectively integrated.

Registration fee is \$15. Checks should be made payable to Baptist Health Systems, Inc., and mailed to the MBMC Pastoral Care Department, 1225 North State Street, Jackson, MS 39202. Deadline for registration is September 7. For more information, call (601) 968-5146 or go to [www.mbms.org](http://www.mbms.org), enter Pastoral Care in the search box, and click on Current and Upcoming Events.



## Bibliocipher

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SBF OSS FYCDB FYOF

DBBQ FYBB EBVCUXB

OAJ TB WSOJ UA FYBB:

OAJ SBF DGXY OD SCMB

FYN DOSMOFUCA DON

XCAFUAGOSSN, SBF WCJ

TB KOWAUZUBJ.

HDOSK DBMBAFN:ZCGE

Clue: E = R

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Ecclesiastes 5:7

THANK YOU,  
MARGARET LACKEY

Hopefully, in just a few days every one of our Mississippi Baptist churches will enter into a time of prayer and giving for State Missions. We will be observing the Week of Prayer for State Missions and giving to special needs through the Margaret Lackey Offering. As in the case of our two other special mission offerings involving Lottie and Annie, this time of year provides opportunity for some folks to ask, "Who in the world is Margaret Lackey?" Beyond that some may say, "Who cares and what difference does it make?" Please permit me to say clearly and unapologetically, "I care," and may I add, "It makes a world of difference."

Margaret Lackey was the first recording secretary of the WMU in Mississippi. She did not set out to build an empire or to have an offering named after her. Her passion in life was to see people in Mississippi come to know the Lord and to grow in their understanding and love for Him. Whether in the halls of the capitol, in the halls of our churches, or in the halls of a hospital Margaret Lackey recognized that everyone there needed to know Jesus.

The offering to which we give is not just to commemorate her name, but it is to celebrate her passion, a passion which came from God and must continue through us. The Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering began in 1903. In that year Mississippi Baptists gave less than \$300.00 so that we could penetrate the darkness in Mississippi with the glorious Gospel, the Light of the world. It was a small beginning and in more recent days we have watched as the State Mission Offering has doubled over the past five years. You have done



## Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer  
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

a great thing Mississippi Baptists and your impact has become greater and greater. This year our goal is \$1.65 MILLION and you are needed to reach that level of giving. Let me take a moment to share with you how through these years because of the faithful giving of Mississippi Baptists we should stop and say, "Thank You, Margaret," you have made a difference.

Thank you Margaret for over \$20 million given in the past 75 years through the State Mission Offering that went directly to the carrying out of the Great Commission of Jesus to Mississippi.

Thank you, Margaret for enabling our camps to grow, to care, and to touch the lives of young people. If you added together the number of campers that have been through GA Camp at Garaywa and RA Camp at Central Hills over the past 10 years, there would be over 34,277 young people who have been able to attend camp because of your provision.

Thank you, Margaret for enabling us to reach beyond and behind prison walls and iron doors so that men and women whose lives seem to be wrecked and ruined can find hope in our powerful Savior. Over the past 20 years \$471,134 went to the Criminal Justice Ministries of Mississippi Baptists through this special offering.

Thank you, Margaret Lackey for allowing Mississippi Baptists to remain poised and ready to respond 24 hours a day, 365 days a year whenever a disaster might hit a commu-

nity or region of our state. Our Disaster Relief teams are second to none when it comes to arriving on the scene quickly with a cup of cold water, a hot meal, and hands ready to do whatever it takes to help lives be put back together. Over the past 10 years \$399,637 was given to Disaster Relief so that whatever happens, wherever it happens Mississippi Baptists will be there on the scene in the name of Jesus saying, "We care." Even today the Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Units are in the center of need in Florida.

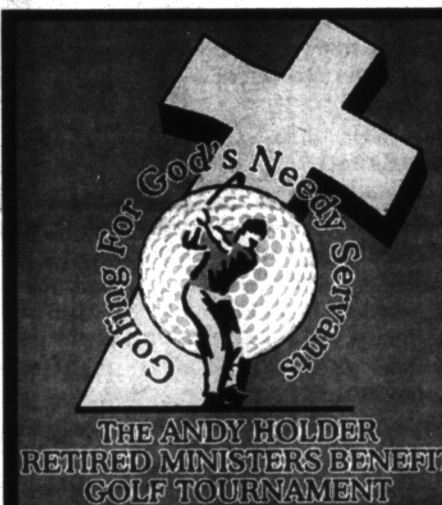
Thank you, Margaret Lackey for allowing us to be a part of mobilizing your people to go on mission with Jesus. It is not unusual for there to be a great mission need somewhere across the land or around the world and that need be coupled with a responsive heart that is able, capable, and willing to go and make a difference. Sometimes

they are unable to connect, but because of the generosity of Mississippi Baptists we have seen scores of people given the incentive, encouragement, and the assistance to get up and go with Jesus.

Thank you, Margaret Lackey for enabling us to make it possible for God-guided church planters to go out into pockets of unreached people and setup a beacon of light giving hope to everyone around in beginning a new church. In just the last two years because of the faithful giving of Mississippi Baptists, we have seen 20 new church starts from one end of the state to the other.

In reality all of these words of thanks to Margaret Lackey are words of appreciation to you. Her love for the Lord and her care for people provided a spirit that should capture each of us, but the real issue will be the response that we give. Her work is over and it is now our day to make a difference. Please pray! Please provide an opportunity for folks in your church to know of the significance of this offering and then to give that it might continue to impact our state and our world for Jesus.

The author may be contacted at  
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The "Andy Holder"  
Retired Ministers  
Benefit  
Golf Tournament

September 16 & 17

Bay Pointe Country Club  
in Brandon

8 a.m. & 1 p.m.  
Tee Times

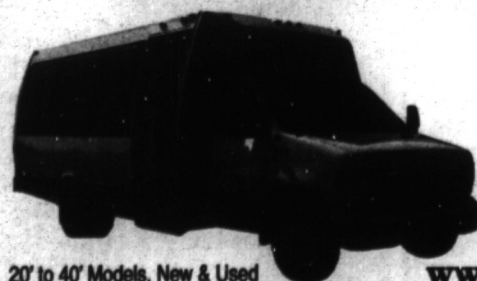
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At the Mississippi Baptist Foundation, we provide information as well as church seminars on a wide range of programs and financial services. Call us at (601) 292-3210.

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